

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACTION MEMORANDUM

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June 20, 1975

To: The Secretary

From: AF - Edward W. Mulcahy, ^{FWM} Acting

Vance Mission to Zaire: Terms of Reference

President Mobutu has accepted your offer to send Ambassador Vance and AF/C Director Cutler to Kinshasa to discuss two major issues: allegations of US involvement in a plot against Mobutu; and the situation in Angola and possible cooperative actions to meet that situation. We should decide the general terms of reference for Vance's discussions.

Background

The government-controlled media in Zaire are continuing to play up the alleged plot, claiming that a few Zairian military officers were caught planning Mobutu's assassination with US, particularly CIA, support. Mobutu has publicly confirmed the existence of the plot and, while not explicitly naming the US, has clearly indicated that the "evidence" now being examined by the Government implicates certain US officials. Unless he decides to call off the public campaign, his expulsion of Ambassador Hinton seems likely to be followed by further revelations of other US officials allegedly involved. The campaign has included threats as well as assurances with regard to the safety of the 2,300 Americans living in Zaire. While Mobutu has indicated willingness to tone down public attacks on us pending Vance' arrival, he will probably reserve his final decision of which way to move until he assesses the results of our talks.

How we approach Mobutu relates to how we read the causes of his discontent and his objectives. These are not yet clear. There seems to have been some opposition activity brewing among some of the younger military

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officers (many of whom are US-trained) which may have involved at least the seeds of a coup plot. By publicizing the plot and linking it to a foreign power, Mobutu may be seeking to warn off any serious moves against him, revitalize flagging mass support for his regime, and convey the impression that foreign, not domestic, forces are primarily to blame.

His decision to implicate the US probably stems from several factors. There is ample evidence that Mobutu has developed some genuine anxieties and suspicions regarding US intentions: he has been disillusioned by what he views as inadequate US support for his regime, notably with respect to Angola and military and economic assistance. He probably relates this level of support to what he perceives as US disapproval of his growing Third World posture, his expanding relations with communist countries and his domestic "radicalization" program. And, in his mind, it is probably a short step from US disapproval to active efforts by us to foment a change of leadership in Zaire.

We think it is likely that certain elements in his regime (e.g. Mobutu's new, Marxist-oriented Foreign Minister, Bula Mandungu) have exploited and exacerbated Mobutu's suspicions of our intentions by feeding him "evidence" of US skullduggery, with Ambassador Hinton a prime target. At the same time, Mobutu may have decided that since the US no longer seemed to share Zaire's interests, exposing a US "plot" would be worth the risk to our considerable bilateral relations if it served to justify moving closer to socialist powers and, perhaps, would jog the US into paying more attention to his needs.

Issues/Objectives

Given these considerations, what we need to do now is: -- defuse Mobutu's anger; -- reveal the falsity of material "evidence" and dispel some of his obvious misconceptions; -- reassure him of our continuing friendship; --and, where possible, assist him in areas of need. Our objective is to deter him from taking further actions against US interests in Zaire, induce him to put to rest the plot allegations and move toward restoring mutual confidence.

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To achieve these immediate objectives, we suggest the following general terms of reference for Ambassador Vance's discussions:

Plot Allegations

1. We will seek to have Mobutu share fully with us information implicating the US in a plot, including all documents and other material evidence. We will be prepared to examine the evidence in detail and provide Mobutu with whatever information and explanations that may be required to clear up his misunderstandings.
2. In reviewing Mobutu's evidence, we will seek to point out any apparent distortions made by whoever has been feeding him information. At the same time, to show good faith and maintain credibility, we will be ready to take immediate remedial measures of any improprieties revealed with respect to US personnel or procedures.
3. We will seek at the end of our review the GOZ's expression of confidence, preferably public, that any US involvement in a plot was circumstantial and did not constitute an official effort to undermine Mobutu's rule. We, for our part, will be prepared to acknowledge any US improprieties we may discover, promise measures to correct them or prevent them from recurring, and to declare our resolve to continue to refrain from any interference in Zaire's internal affairs.

Angola

1. Our approach on Angola will be primarily one of listening and learning. Accordingly, we will seek Mobutu's views on Angola so that we may better assess the directions in which the situation is moving and understand Zaire's position and objectives.
2. We will make clear our own concern regarding Angola and, if it is apparent that Mobutu's present interests are compatible with our own, solicit his suggestions on precise ways by which the US and GOZ might cooperate to promote those interests. We will make

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clear that US policies on Angola are now under review and that his views and suggestions will constitute an important factor in the formulation of our policies.

Providing Mobutu provides cooperative in clearing the air of plot allegations, it would be tactically desirable to be able to show forward movement on other elements of our bilateral issues of concern to him. Beyond Angola, there are three possibilities:

Military Assistance

-- Pending clarification of what we could offer Zaire in the way of military assistance, we have delayed submitting to Mobutu a report done several months ago by a DOD team on the modernization needs of Zaire's military. He will probably ask about this. We had hoped for fallout funds to raise this year's FMS credit program from \$3.5 million closer to the \$9.5 million planned for next year, and we have been awaiting word on the prospects of getting three used C-130s from Indochina. We learned last week that there is no fallout money. But if we could make a firm offer of the C-130s (with terms and delivery dates to be worked out later), offer some associated pilot training in the US (by increasing FY 76 MAP training for Zaire by \$400,000 or \$500,000), and tell him about the \$6 million FMS credit increase planned for FY 76, that would have a strong favorable impact.

Financial Crisis

-- Zaire's temporary foreign exchange liquidity crisis is a critical problem for Mobutu. Given the heavy involvement of US financial institutions with Zaire, it is also a serious concern for us and a source of potentially serious conflict in our bilateral relations. Based on his recent consultations in Washington, Ambassador Hinton has told GOZ officials that the USG would be "favorably disposed" toward making a contribution if Zaire should decide to turn to the IMF to organize a stabilization program to deal with Zaire's situation. It would be a big step forward if we could make that pledge definite, leaving the amount (probably only \$30-40 million--the impact of our participation on banking confidence would be the important thing) and the means (PL 480, AID program loan, etc.) to be determined.

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Trade Fair Presentation

-- This is Mobutu's tenth anniversary, and a part of the celebration to which he attaches great importance is the Kinshasa International Fair (FIKIN), which opens in a few days. We had intended to be represented at "US pavilion day," July 4, by Assistant Secretary Davis. If things go well in our talks with Mobutu, we would like to be able to assure him that we will be represented by someone else of stature.

US Diplomatic Representation

-- An early appointment of a new Ambassador to Kinshasa would constitute a mark of our desire to restore full and healthy relations. We should be prepared to take this step at an early date, assuming the Vance talks move well.

Drafted: AF/C:WLCutler:osm
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